



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Hoeven Proclaims Suicide Prevention Week in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed September 9 through 15, 2007, as Suicide Prevention Week in North Dakota.

According to the North Dakota Department of Health, suicide is the second leading cause of death among North Dakotans age 15 to 24 and the ninth leading cause of death overall. It is the 11th leading cause of death among Americans. In 2006, 91 North Dakotans died as a result of suicide.

Suicide affects everyone, but some groups are at higher risk than others. Men are four times more likely than women to die from suicide. However, three times more women than men report attempting suicide.

“It’s important for all of us to understand the risk factors for suicide,” said Mary Dasovick, director of the Department of Health’s Division of Injury Prevention and Control. “We need to realize, however, that not everyone who displays these risk factors will attempt suicide.”

Risk factors for suicide include, but are not limited to:

- Previous suicide attempt(s).
- History of depression or other mental illness.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Family history of suicide or violence.
- Physical illness.
- Feeling alone.

“Unfortunately, someone dies as a result of suicide every 16 minutes in the United States,” said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. “About 5 million Americans have lost a loved one to suicide. That’s why it’s important for all of us to recognize the warning signs and reach out to people who are having difficulty coping.”

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

The warning signs of suicide can include:

- Changes in a person's mood, diet or sleeping pattern.
- Increased alcohol or drug use.
- Withdrawal from friends, family and society.
- Rage or uncontrolled anger.
- Reckless behavior.

Some of the ways to be helpful to someone who is threatening suicide include:

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be nonjudgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from someone specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention. In North Dakota, help is available by calling **2-1-1**, a free and confidential 24/7 information, referral and crisis management services program.

The North Dakota Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention raises funds for scientific research, education and treatment programs, as well as programs to support those who have lost loved ones to suicide. On Sept. 30, 2007, the Fargo- Moorhead "Out of the Darkness" Community Walk will be held in Fargo to raise funds for suicide prevention and awareness. Registration is at 1 p.m. at the Island Park Gazebo; the noncompetitive walk along the Red River will begin at 2 p.m.

The North Dakota Department of Health, Mental Health America of North Dakota, and the North Dakota Department of Human Services are partnering with local organizations and tribal agencies to address suicide prevention through the North Dakota Suicide Prevention Coalition.

For more information, contact Mary Dasovick, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.3340.

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Please note: Proclamation follows.

Proclamation
SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK
September 9 – 15, 2007

WHEREAS, suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States and the third leading cause of death among people age 15 to 24; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, one person commits suicide every 16 minutes; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that 5 million Americans have lost a loved one to suicide; and

WHEREAS, suicide is the ninth leading cause of death in North Dakota and the second leading cause of death among North Dakotans age 15 to 24; and

WHEREAS, agencies and individuals across North Dakota are working to prevent suicide; and

WHEREAS, all North Dakotans are encouraged to learn the warning signs of suicide and to get appropriate help for themselves and their family members who are at risk.

NOW, THEREFORE, as the Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim September 9 – 15, 2007, **SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK** in the state of North Dakota.

John Hoeven
Governor